

REMARKS

In response to an Official Action dated September 28, 2006, Applicants submit the following remarks. This application contains claims 1-34, all of which were rejected in the present Official Action. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-34 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Walsh et al. (U.S. Patent 6,810,429) in view of Webber (U.S. Patent 6,418,400) and, with respect to some of the claims, further in view of Britton et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication 2002/0059344). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection, on the grounds that the invention recited in claims 1-34 was conceived prior to the filing date of Walsh (February 3, 2000), and that Applicants diligently pursued the constructive reduction to practice of the present invention from before February 3, 2000, up to the filing date of the present patent application. Applicants submit herewith a Declaration under 37 CFR 1.131, providing detailed, documentary evidence of both conception of the invention prior to February 3, 2000, and diligence in reduction to practice during the period between February 3 and August 30, 2000, when the present patent application was filed. On the basis of this Declaration, Applicants believe that the present rejection should be withdrawn.

Applicants believe the remarks presented hereinabove to be fully responsive to all of the grounds of rejection raised by the Examiner. In view of these remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that all of the claims in the present application are in order for allowance. Notice to this effect is hereby requested.

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Respectfully submitted,

By 
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